H. Thrace.

A pleaſant Hiſtory of a Gentleman in *Thracia*, which had foure Sonnes, and three of them none of his own; ſhewing how miraculouſly the true heire came to enioy his Inheritance.

To the tune of, *Chevy Chace.*

BRITISH MUSEUM 156.

IN ſearching ancient Chronicles,
it was my chance to finde
A ſtory worth the writting out,
in my conceit and minde;
It is an admonition good,
that Children ought to haue,
With reuerence for to thinke vpon
their Parents laid in graue.

In Thracia liu'd a Gentleman,
of Noble Progeny,
Who rul'd his houſhold with great fame
and true integrity;
This Gentleman did take to wife,
a neat and gallant Dame,
Whoſe outward ſhew and beauty bright
did many hearts inflame.

The luſter that came from her lookes,
her carriage and her grace,
Like beauteous Cynthia did outſhine
each Lady in that place;
And being puffed vp in pride,
with eaſe and lolitie,
Her Husband could not her content,
ſhe other men muſt try.

Laſciuiouſly long time ſhe liu'd,
yet haze it cunningly,
For ſhe had thoſe that watcht ſo well,
that he could nought eſpy;
With bribes and gifts ſhe ſo bewitcht
the hearts of ſome were there,
That they conceal'd her wickednеſſe,
and kept it from her Deare.

Thus ſpending of her time away
in extreme wantonneſſe,
Her priuate friends when ſhe did pleaſe,
vnto her had acceſſe;
But the all-ſeeing Eye of heauen,
ſuch ſinnes will not conceale,
And by ſome meanes at laſt will be
the truth of all reueale.

Vpon a time ſore ſicke ſhe fell,
yea to the very death,
And her Phyſician told her plaine,
ſhe muſt reſigne her breath;
Diuines did likewiſe viſit her,
and holy counſell gaue,
And bade her call vpon the Lord,
that he her ſoule might ſaue.

Amongſt the reſt, ſhe did deſire
they would her husband bring,
I haue a ſecret to reueale,
(ſhe ſaid) my heart doth ſting;
Then he came poſting preſently,
vnto her where ſhe lay,
And weeping, then he did deſire,
what ſhe to him would ſay?

She did intreat that all might goe
the roome, and he would ſtay:
Your pardon, husband, I beſeech,
(vnto him ſhe did ſay;)
For I haue wrong'd your marriage bed,
and plaid the wanton wife,
To you the truth I will reueale,
ere I depart this life. 45. b. 28. 27.

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FOure hopefull sonnes you think you
to me it best is knowne, (have,
And three of them are none of yours,
of foure but one's your owne;
And by your selfe on me begot,
which hath so wanton been,
These dying teares forgiuenesse beg.
let mercy then beseene.

This stroke her husband in a dumpe;
his heart was almost dead,
But rousing of his spirits vp,
these words to her he said;
I doe forgiue thee with my heart,
so thou the truth wilt tell,
Which of the foure is my owne sonne,
and all things shall be well.

O pardon me, my husband deare,
vnto him she did say,
They are my children every one,
and so she went away.
Away he goes with heauy heart,
his griefes he did conceale,
And like a wise and prudent man,
to none did it reueale.

Not knowing which to be his owne,
each of his sone did share,
And to be train'd in vertues paths,
of them he had a care;
In learning great and gentle grace,
they were brought vp and taught,
Such deare affection in the hearts
of Parents God hath wrought.

They now were grown to mens estates,
and liu'd most gallantly;
Each had his horse, his hawke, his hound
and did their manhood try;
The ancient man did ioy thereat,
but yet he did not know,
Which was his sonne amongst the foure
that bred in him much woe.

At length his glasse of life was run,
the Fates doe so decree,
For poore and rich they all must dye,
and death will take no fee;
Vnto some Iudges he did send,
and Counsell that were graue,
Who presently to him did come,
to know what he would haue.

They comming then to his beds side,
vnto them he did say,
I know you all to be my friends,
most faithfull every way;
And now before I leaue the world,
I beg this at your hands,
To haue a care which of my sonnes
shall haue my goods and lands.

And to them all he did relate
what things his wife had done;
There is but one amongst the foure
that is my native sonne;
And to your iudgement I commit,
when I am laid in graue,
Which is my sonne, and which is fit
my lands and goods to haue.

The dying, they in Councell sate
what best were to be done,
For 'twas a taske of great import.
to iudge which was his sonne:
The brothers likewise were at strife,
which should the liuing haue;
When as the ancient man was dead,
and buried in his graue.

The Iudges must decide the cause,
and thus they did decree,
The dead mans body vp to take,
and tye it to a Tree;
A Bow each brother he must haue,
and eke an arrow take,
To shoot at their dead fathers corps,
as if he were a stake.

And he whose Arrow nearest hit
his heart as he did stand,
They'd iudge him for to be right heire,
and fit to haue the land:
On this they all did streight agree,
and to the field they went,
Each had a man his shaft to beare,
and Bow already bent.

Now (quoth the Iudges) try your skill
vpon your Father there,
That we may quickly know who shall
vnto the Land be heire;
The eldest take his Bow in hand,
and shaft where as he stood,
Which pierc'd so deep the dead mans breast
that it did run with blood.

The second brother then must shoot,
who straight did take his aime,
And with his Arrow made a wound,
that blood came from the same:
The third likewise must try his skill,
the matter to decide,
Whose shaft did make a wound most deep
into the dead mans side.

Unto the fourth and youngest then,
a Bow and shaft was brought;
Who said, Wee' thinke that ere my heart
could harbour such a thought,
To shoot at my deare Fathers heart,
although that he be dead,
For all the Kingdomes in the world
that farre and wide are spred:

And turning of him round about,
the teares ran downe amaine,
He flung his Bow vpon the ground,
and broke his shaft in twaine:
The Iudges seeing his remorse,
they then concluded all,
He was the right, the other three,
they were vnnaturall.

And so he straight possest the Lands,
being made the heire of all,
And heauen by nature in this kind,
vnto his heart did call;
His brothers they did enuy him,
but yet he nought car'd not,
And of his wealth in portions large,
vnto them he did shard.

FINIS.

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